Remarks

Claims 35-46 are pending and rejected. Applicant respectfully requests allowance of claims 35-46.

The prior amendment is objected to under 35 U.S.C. §132 for introducing new matter in new claims 36, 39, 42, and 45. Applicants traverse this objection because the subject matter of these claims is <u>clearly and repeatedly</u> described in the specification as filed. (See the Application, page 7, line 17 to page 9, line 24; page 10, lines 13-19; and page 11, lines 7-25). These sections clearly describe adding terminated section overhead information and terminated line overhead information to unused space in a transport overhead of a SONET signal. The objection should be withdrawn. If the objection is maintained, Applicant formally requests that the Examiner identify the <u>specific</u> subject matter in the claims that represents new matter.

Claims 36, 39, 42, and 45 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112 for lacking of written description. Applicants traverse this rejection because the subject matter of these claims is <u>clearly and repeatedly</u> described in the specification as filed. (See the Application, page 7, line 17 to page 9, line 24; page 10, lines 13-19; and page 11, lines 7-25). These sections clearly describe adding terminated section overhead information and terminated line overhead information to unused space in a transport overhead of a SONET signal. The rejection should be withdrawn. If the rejection is maintained, Applicant formally requests that the Examiner identify the <u>specific</u> subject matter in the claims that lacks a written description.

Claims 41-42 and 44-45 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) over U.S. Patent 5,600,648 (Furuta). Claims 41-42 and 44-45 require a first assembly that receives a first signal having overhead and payload. The first assembly *terminates* the overhead, and then transfers the <u>terminated</u> overhead along with the payload to a second assembly. The second assembly generates a second signal having the <u>terminated</u> overhead and the payload. Thus, the second signal could be a duplicate of the first signal, even though the

overhead in the first signal was terminated at the first assembly (and typically terminated again at the second assembly).

In the prior art, SONET/SDH nodes terminate overhead by *replacing* the terminated overhead with new overhead, and since the terminated overhead is *replaced*, the terminated overhead is NOT transferred or used to generate downstream signals.

Furuta provides a technique for extracting a specific virtual container from a signal and then inspecting the path overhead in the extracted virtual container. Furuta does not teach: 1) the termination of overhead and the transfer of the terminated overhead and payload, and 2) the generation of a signal having the terminated overhead and the payload. The Examiner cites FIGS. 12 and 19 of Furuta as teaching the above claim requirements, but Applicant could not find the specific teachings in Furuta for FIGS. 12 and 19 that teach the above claim requirements. If the rejection is maintained, Applicant requests specific citations to Furuta by column and line number that teach: 1) the termination of overhead and the transfer and the terminated overhead and payload from a first node, and 2) the generation of a signal having the terminated overhead and payload at a second node.

Claims 35-40, 43, and 46 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over U.S. Patent 5,600,648 (Furuta) in view of U.S. Patent 5,416,768 (Jahromi). Claims 35-40, 43, and 46 require a first assembly that receives a first signal having overhead and payload. The first assembly *terminates* the overhead, and then transfers the terminated overhead along with the payload to a second assembly. The second assembly generates a second signal having the terminated overhead and the payload. Thus, the second signal could be a duplicate of the first signal, even though the overhead in the first signal was terminated at the first assembly (and typically terminated again at the second assembly).

In the prior art, SONET/SDH nodes terminate overhead by *replacing* the terminated overhead with new overhead, and since the terminated overhead is *replaced*, the terminated overhead is NOT transferred or used to generate downstream signals.

Furuta provides a technique for extracting a specific virtual container from a signal and then inspecting the path overhead in the extracted virtual container (See Furuta, Abstract). Furuta does not teach: 1) the termination of overhead and the transfer of the

7

terminated overhead and payload, and 2) the generation of a signal having the terminated overhead and the payload. The Examiner cites FIGS. 12 and 19 of Furuta as teaching the above claim requirements, but Applicant could not find the specific teachings in Furuta for FIGS. 12 and 19 that teach the above claim requirements. If the rejection is maintained, Applicant requests specific citations to Furuta by column and line number that teach: 1) the termination of overhead and the transfer and the terminated overhead and payload from a first node, and 2) the generation of a signal having the terminated overhead and payload at a second node.

Jahromi does not teach the above cited claim requirements.

Applicant refers the Examiner to the brief overview of well-known SONET overhead processing that was provided in Applicant's last response.

Applicants submit that there are numerous additional reasons in support of patentability, but that such reasons are moot in light of the above remarks and are omitted in the interests of brevity. Applicants respectfully request allowance of claims 35-46.

SIGNATURE OF PRACTITIONER

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8